

personal interview, independent claims 1 and 8 were discussed in detail in view of the prior art references to Rahn, Yates and Norris. The foregoing amendments reflect issues raised and discussed during the personal interview.

Referring now to the Official Action, claims 1-4, 7-11 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Norris. Additionally, claims 1-14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rahn. Each of these rejections are respectfully traversed in that neither the patent to Norris nor Rahn nor any of those of record disclose or remotely suggest that which is presently set forth by applicant's claimed invention.

As discussed during the personal interview, the patent to Norris discloses a flying insect container guard including a plurality of openings formed in the closure surface of the lid. Clearly, this reference fails to disclose or remotely suggest a lid for a container as recited in each of independent claims 15 and 19 which set forth a lid for a container including a closure surface, a circumferential rim including at least one outer wall, an inner wall and a transition wall extending therebetween with the closure surface extending from the lower most portion of the inner wall, a plurality of cut outs formed in at least the transition wall, and a circumferential seal positioned along the inner side wall between the cut outs and the closure surface. Further, independent claim 15 recites that the closure surface includes at least one access opening formed therein. Clearly, the patent to Norris fails to disclose or remotely suggest such features. That is, as discussed during the personal interview, the Norris reference is directed to a flying insect container guard which includes a screened matrix of predetermined openings tapering downwardly into orifices to meter the flow of fluid from an associated beverage container through the openings. Clearly, the Norris reference does include a circumferential rim including an outer wall, an inner wall and a transition wall extending therebetween with the closure surface extending from the lower most portion of the inner wall as well as a circumferential seal positioned along the inner side wall between the cut outs and closure surface. Moreover, it is the intent of the Norris disclosure to have the fluid on the container pass through the openings which is directly contrary to the present invention given the positioning of the circumferential seal.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that applicant's claimed invention as set forth in each of independent claims 15 and 19 clearly distinguish over the teachings of Norris.

With respect to new independent claims 23 and 29, again the Norris reference fails to include a lid free container including a closure surface, a circumferential rim having an outer wall, an inner wall and a transition wall as well as a closure surface extending from a lower most portion of the inner wall and a seal positioned along the inner side wall between the cut outs formed in the circumferential rim and the closure surface. Again, as noted above, it is the intent of the Norris disclosure to have the fluid on the container pass through the openings which is directly contrary to the present invention given the positioning of the circumferential seal. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that each of independent claims 23 and 29 as well as those claims which depend there from or likewise distinguish over the teachings of Norris and are in proper condition for allowance.

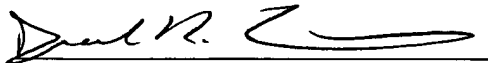
Referring now to the patent to Rahn, as noted in applicant's previous response, the invention of Rahn is directed to a keg cap for covering the open end of a Barnes neck surrounding the outlet of a keg for malt beverages and includes a vent means at the junction of the top of the lid and the skirt. These vents are provided so as to allow small amounts of fluid which are accidentally released from the keg to be vented from within the lid. Clearly, the teachings of Rahn would not lead one of ordinary skill in the art to provide a lid for a container as is set forth by applicant's claimed invention. Particularly, the patent to Rahn fails to disclose a circumferential rim including at least an outer wall, an inner wall and a transition wall. Further, one of ordinary skill in the art clearly would not provide a circumferential seal positioned along an inner wall between the cut outs and the closure surface of Rahn in that the purpose of Rahn is to permit fluid to escape through the openings formed therein. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that applicant's claimed invention as set forth in each of independent claims 15, 19, 23 and 29 as well as those claims which depend there from clearly distinguish over the teachings of Rahn and are in perfect condition for allowance.

With respect to the remaining prior art of record, during the personal interview, the Examiner noted U.S. Patent No. 3,532,244 issued to Yates which discloses a seal for a resealable bucket closure which arguably includes cut outs formed therein. While these slots may permit a visual inspection of the brim of the container, such is not the intent of the slots. The slots are provided to allow the flange of the lid to easily expand for removal of the lid from the container or placement of the lid on the container. Clearly, independent claims 15, 19, 23 and 29 set forth features which are nowhere disclosed nor remotely suggested by the teachings of Yates. Particularly, Yates fails to disclose that the closure surface of the lid extends from a lower most portion of the inner wall of the circumferential rim, nor would it be desirable to do so given the positioning of the seal between the lid and container of Yates. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that applicant's claimed invention as set forth in each of independent claims 15, 19, 23 and 29 as well as those claims which depend there from clearly distinguish over the teachings of Yates as well as the remaining prior art references of record.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing comments as well as the discussion during the personal interview of February 26, 2002, it is respectfully requested that the objections and rejections of record be reconsidered and withdrawn by the Examiner, that claims 15-34 be allowed and that the application be passed to issued.

Should the Examiner believe a further conference would be a benefit in expediting the prosecution of the instant application he is hereby invited to telephone counsel to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald R. Studebaker
Registration No. 32,815

NIXON PEABODY LLP
8180 Greensboro Drive, Suite 800
McLean, VA 22102
(703) 770-9300